



Access- Ability

The AccessAbility Office is the Endowment's advocacy and technical assistance arm for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and people living in institutions, including long-term care settings. The Office works with grantees, applicants, organizations representing these citizens, and other federal agencies to help make the arts more readily available to the targeted populations.

The Office makes presentations at professional conferences on the importance and implementation of accessible arts programs. During Fiscal Year 1998, workshops and panels were presented at eight conferences including those of the National Council on Aging in Washington, D.C.; the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in Cleveland; and the American Association of Museums in Los Angeles.

On June 14-16, 1998 the Arts Endowment convened the first National Forum on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, Social

Security Administration, and John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Three hundred artists, arts administrators, rehabilitation professionals, and educators worked together to assess the state of arts education and career opportunities for disabled individuals in sessions that addressed training, funding, and jobs. Participants also identified strategies for advancing arts careers for disabled and older citizens.



Dancing Wheels/Professional Flair from Cleveland presented dance excerpts at the 1998 National Forum on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities. Photo by Brent Alberda.

The Arts Endowment is a leader in promoting universal design, which emphasizes environmental design features usable by

people from childhood into their oldest years. At the first-ever international universal design conference convened at New York's Hofstra University in June 1998, the Arts Endowment received the Universal Design Leadership Award for its "substantial and effective leadership in encouraging and assisting universal design." Also in Fiscal Year 1998, the Office developed a universal design initiative with the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. The Center will identify, describe, and document 50 outstanding examples of universal design — including interior, landscape, graphic, architectural, and product design. The collection will be produced on CD-ROM and widely disseminated to the design field to encourage greater use of this design process. Additionally, work was begun in cooperation with the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies to update and put online the 700-page *Design for Accessibility: An Arts Administrator's Guide*, the most comprehensive guide ever for making cultural activities accessible to people with disabilities.